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Kakacūpama Sutta

The Discourse on the Parable of the Saw | M 21

Theme: Monastics must practise complete patience and non-violence

Translated by Piya Tan ©2012

1 Sutta summary and highlights

1.1 PHAGGUNA’S INFATUATION WITH THE NUNS. The **Kakacūpama Sutta** (M 21) is a discourse dealing in some detail with the virtue of patience and non-violence.¹ The Sutta’s teachings are occasioned by the troubling lack of restraint and patience in a monk named Moliya Phagguna. Infatuated with the nuns, Phagguna is “too intimate” (*ativelā*) with them, spending long hours chatting with them until very late, instructing them beyond five or six sentences against the Vinaya rules, and trivializing the serious offences (MA 2:95) [§2n]. His infatuation with the nuns is so deep that he would show anger to anyone who speaks ill of them, and the nuns would similarly fuss over any disapproval of Phagguna. [§2]

1.2 THE BUDDHA ADMONISHES PHAGGUNA

1.2.1 Summary. When the Buddha hears of this [§3], he summons Phagguna, and questions him on his conduct [§§4-5.1]. When Phagguna admits his faults [§5.2], the Buddha begins his admonition by reminding Phagguna that he is a monk [§6.1]. As such, whenever anyone speaks ill of the nuns [§6.2], or were even to strike them in anyway [§6.3], he should not react angrily *as if he were a layman*. Similarly, if anyone were to do all this to him, he should not react angrily *as if he were a layman*, but to cultivate loving-kindness towards them, too [§6.4-5].

1.2.2 The graduated scale of ill-treatment. The **Kakacūpama Sutta** (M 21) opens with the Buddha admonishing Moliya Phagguṇa on his excessive socializing with the nuns [1.2.2]. The Buddha explains to Phagguṇa that his attachment to the nuns has made him prone to feeling upset and angry when anyone speaks ill of them. Applying a “**graduated scale of ill-treatment**” model,² the Buddha exhorts him:

... Phagguna, even if anyone were to speak ill of the nuns in your presence, ...
you should abandon any householder’s desire, any householder’s thought. [§6.2]

... Phagguna, even if anyone, in your presence, were to strike those nuns with the hand, or hurl a clod of earth at them, or hit them with a stick, or strike them with a weapon, ...
you should abandon any householder’s desire, any householder’s thought. [§6.3]

In this connection, Phagguna, you should train yourself thus:

“My heart will not be perverted in any way, nor shall I utter any bad speech, but I shall dwell with a heart of lovingkindness, moved by goodness, without a hating heart.”

This is how you, Phagguna, should train yourself.

... Phagguna, even if anyone, were to speak ill of you to your face,...
you should abandon any householder’s desire, any householder’s thought. [§6.4]

... Phagguna, even if anyone were to strike you with the hand, or hurl a clod of earth at you, or hit you with a stick, or strike you with a weapon, ...

¹ This Sutta is one of the classics in philosophy and practice of non-violence (*ahimsā*), which has influenced great figures like Mahatma Gandhi, whose efforts brought independence to India from the British in 1947.

² The term was coined by F L Woodward: S:W 4:35 n2.

you should abandon any householder's desire, any householder's thought. [§6.5]

In this connection, Phagguna, you should train yourself thus:

“My heart will not be perverted in any way, nor shall I utter any bad speech, but I shall dwell with a heart of lovingkindness, moved by goodness, without a hating heart.”

This is how you, Phagguna, should train yourself. (M 21,6/1:123 f)

The “graduated scale of ill-treatment” refers to various kinds of ill-treatment that a Dharma teacher or Buddhist worker or spiritual practitioner might face, and not to be daunted or discouraged by any of them. Or worse, such ill-treatments may worsen in degree, that is, someone might “strike you with the hand, or hurl a clod of earth at you, or hit you with a stick, or strike you with a weapon.” Even in the face of such terrible odds, we must wholesomely cultivate a boundless heart of lovingkindness.

The graduated scale of ill-treatment is most famously found in **the Puṇṇ'ovāda Sutta** (M 145)³ [2.2.2]. However, this model is presented most dramatically in **the Kakacûpama Sutta**, “the Discourse on the Parable of the Saw” (M 21), culminating in its famous parable of the saw itself [1.5.5].

1.3 TEACHING THE UNCONVERTED

1.3.1 Phagguna's failure. Phagguna's infatuation is clearly a result of deep underlying lust. In this connection, the Buddha encourages him to cut down on his food, and take only one meal a day, speaking of its various benefits [§7.1-3]. Apparently, Phagguna is caught up in his lust and remains unmoved [§7.4]. The Buddha goes on to speak of the compliant monks of his early ministry (MA 2:96 f).

That the Buddha attempts to admonish Phagguna despite his lack of amenability is highly significant. In fact, throughout the Sutta, Phagguna speaks only 3 very short sentences: saying yes to being summoned by the Buddha [§4], admitting he is intimate with the nuns [§5.1], and admitting that he is a monk [§5.2]. Other than these, he does not respond at all to the Buddha's admonition [§6.6].

We could argue that the Buddha was thereby not omniscient, or we could also say that he chose not to read Phagguna's mind before teaching. The point, however, is that even the world's best religious teachers faced great odds, including their close disciples who either rejected the teacher at some point, or failed in some way to be seen to benefit from the teacher's teaching.

Phagguna, infatuated with the nuns, is understandably overwhelmed by lust and delusion. Thus he remains impervious to the Buddha's patient teachings specially given to him. In fact, according to the commentary on **the Kalāra Sutta** (S 12.32), Phagguna, in due course, leaves the order, and returns to lay life. [2.2.1]

1.3.2 Planting Dharma seeds. There are a number of sutta accounts of the Buddha's teaching despite failing to convert his audience.⁴ That such failures do not prevent the Buddha from teaching reflects on his compassion and wisdom. Due to his compassion, the Buddha is willing to teach anyone willing to listen, but the actual practice is up to the listener. If the Buddha were to be able to do everything, including “saving” the listener, then we need not make any self-effort at all, since this would be pure determinism. The Buddha's compassion is the bridge over which his wisdom flows into us, that is, if we allow it to.

Another vital point to note here is that the Buddha places the Dharma above even himself, and as such makes sure that everyone has a chance to hear it, even if they remain unconverted. They need to hear the Dharma first so that the seeds are planted, and in due course, they would mature into liberation. Nothing is wasted when teaching the Dharma: for, here we are studying these same teachings where others have failed! In **the Sarakāṇi Sutta 1** (S 55.24), the Buddha declares that

³ M 145/3:267-270 ≈ **Puṇṇa S** (S 35.88/4:60-63), SD 20.15 (4.2).

⁴ For a list, see **Udumbarika S** (D 25) @ SD 1.4 (2.3).

Even these great sal trees,⁵ Mahānāma, *if they could understand*⁶ *what is well spoken and what is ill spoken*, I would declare them to be streamwinners, no longer bound to the lower world, sure of going over to self-awakening! (S 55.24,13/5:377)

Anyone who hears the Dharma will somehow benefit, if not in this life itself, certainly in some future one. Even though someone like Phagguna does not respond positively to the Buddha's teachings (on account of his own weakness), the teaching benefit the monastic members who are his audience, and ultimately, we too benefit from such teachings.

1.4 PARABLES FOR THE 3 TRAININGS. The Buddha then addresses the assembled monks giving them three parables to highlight the three trainings, that is, in moral virtue, mental cultivation and wisdom. These three trainings, however, are not the usual overview of monastic life, but are specific teachings related to the unwholesome conduct exemplified by Phagguna, a monk who is infatuated with nuns and sensual pleasures, and is easily angered as a result.

1.4.1 The chariot and the skilled charioteer [§7.5]. This 1st parable refers to **moral virtue**. The charioteer in his well-equipped chariot on good level ground is ready to go wherever he pleases and to return. This refers to *a morally virtuous monk*.⁷ The chariot is *the body*, the horses *the mind*, and the charioteer *mindfulness*. The good level road on which the charioteer and his chariot can travel safely is a figure for the conduct of *the morally virtuous*, who easily focusses his mind and enters into dhyana.

For this reason, the Buddha says, "I had only to rouse mindfulness in them" [§7.5]. This is a clear allusion to the first two of the three trainings, that is, *moral virtue as the basis for mental cultivation*.⁸ This parable recurs in **the Samādhi Pañc'āṅgika Sutta** (A 5.28), where the Buddha adds:

"Even so, bhikshus, when he has cultivated thus, when he has developed the noble 5-factor-ed right samadhi, whatever higher knowledge that should be realized that he directs his mind to, he realizes it.

—He gains the ability to witness [to personally experience] any aspect therein, whenever the conditions are right [whenever the occasion arises]. (A 5.28,14/3:28), SD 33.13

The Buddha then declares that the meditator, if he wishes, can direct his mind to cultivate any of the superknowledges, even the direct knowledge of awakening, if the conditions are right.⁹

1.4.2 The sal forest [§8.2]. This 2nd parable is about **mental cultivation**. A caring man sees a great sal forest that is overgrown with castor-oil plants, stunting the sal trees' growth. He clears up the forest so that the sal trees grow well and develop fully. This refers to a meditator, after letting go of distractions from the physical senses, works to rid his mind of negative mental states.

The 1st-dhyana pericope has the phrase, "detached [secluded] from sensual pleasures, detached from unwholesome mental states,"¹⁰ where "sensual pleasures" refers to the physical senses and their distract-

⁵ Comy says that the Buddha was pointing to 4 sal trees (*Shorea robusta*) nearby (AA 3:288).

⁶ "Could understand," *ājāneyyūṃ* (lit "were to understand"), pot 3rd pl of *ājānāti*, "to know, to understand, to learn, to realize; to understand, to perceive" (CPD). This verb refers to seeing through illusion directly at reality, a vision that would surely lead to the wisdom called *aññā*, "final knowledge," the wisdom of the arhats.

⁷ See §7.5 n below for refs and details.

⁸ On the 3 trainings (*ti,sikkhā*), see **Sīla samādhi paññā**, SD 21.6..

⁹ A 5.28,15-20/1:3:28 f (SD 33.13).

¹⁰ *Vivicc'eva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi* (D 22,21/2:313 f, M 141,31/3:252; also D 2,75-81/1:73-75, M 27,19-22/1:181 f). See **Bhāvanā**, SD 15.1 (8.6.3); **Dhyana**, SD 8.4 (4).

ions, and the “unwholesome mental states” refers to directing the mind away from distracting thoughts so that it focusses on the meditation object.

The Cûla Dhamma Samadâna Sutta (M 45) gives a more elaborate parable of a sal tree overgrown with creepers. An apparently insignificant maluva seed falls near a sal tree, and in due course grows into heavy and luxuriant creepers, strangling the sal tree and finally toppling it. This is a lesson for monastics and holy men who habitually *indulge in sexual pleasures, which in due course ripen in pain*, that is, rebirth in hell states,¹¹ just like the fate of a sal tree gradually overgrown by a creeper.¹²

1.4.3 The woman-slave Kâlî [§9]. The 3rd parable of the Kakacûpama Sutta—the parable of the house lady Vedehikâ’s slave, Kâlî—is meant to be humorous so that it is well remembered, as it is a figure for the third of the three trainings [1.4], that of **wisdom**. It is actually a parody on a house-slave who insubordinates her mistress in a manner unimaginable to other slaves in her society.¹³

The woman-slave Kâlî’s mistress, the house lady Vedehikâ, is renowned for being gentle, humble and calm. Kâlî, wishing to find out for herself whether her mistress is just putting on airs or is really such a virtuous person, wakes up late one day. Her mistress only mildly reprimands her. Kâlî then wakes up later in the day, and her mistress merely sternly disapproves of her. Finally, Kâlî gets up even later in the day, and this time, the angry mistress hits her head with a hard object so that she bleeds.

Kâlî then goes about spreading the complaint that her mistress is only a hypocrite, not really a gentle, humble and calm person she pretends to be. This story is ironically humorous at best, showing how foolish, self-righteous, cunning, and disloyal, the woman-slave is. Although slaves have more freedom than labourers (*kamma,kara*) and hired hands (*porisa*) in the Buddha’s times, they are unlikely to be so undutiful or treacherous.¹⁴

This is clearly a parable told for the benefit of Phagguna, a monk who is infatuated with the nuns, the assembled monks, and practitioners today. The parable is used by the Buddha to remind the monks (and us) not to merely *appear* to be virtuous or tractable, but the reality is that this is merely a pretence for personal gains [§10.1-2]. Only one who gives the highest priority in his life to the Dharma that he is said to be truly *tractable*, that is, capable of being receptive of wisdom.

1.5 THE 5 COURSES OF SPEECH AND THEIR PARABLES

1.5.0 The 5 courses of speech. The Kakacûpama Sutta closes with a long section on the nature of human speech. The Buddha reminds us to understand that when others speak to us, they may do so in one or other of these 5 courses of speech, each comprising of two ways of talk, that is, (1) timely or untimely, (2) true or false, (3) gentle or harsh, (4) connected with the goal or unconnected with the goal, and (5) with lovingkindness or with a hating heart. Either way, we should maintain a calm mind, thus:

Our hearts will not be perverted in any way, nor shall we utter any bad speech, but we shall dwell with a heart of lovingkindness, moved by goodness, without a hating heart.

And we will dwell pervading that person with a heart of lovingkindness. And based on that [And beginning there], we will dwell pervading the whole world with a heart of lovingkindness, vast, grown great, boundless, free from hate, free from ill will. [§11.3]

¹¹ Judging from **Āpāyika S** (A 3.111/1:266,3) [4], the prospect of rebirth in hell awaits not only those who indulge in sex while pretending to be living a celibate life (*brahma,cariya*), but is also obtains in simply holding this view and acting accordingly, even if this is done *without* feigning celibacy.

¹² M 45,4.1/1:306 (SD 32.4).

¹³ Slaves, in the Buddha’s time, however, were generally well treated. See **The person in Buddhism**, SD 29.6b (6.4).

¹⁴ See **Sigāl’ovāda S** (D 31,32/3:190), SD 4.1 n.

This is the Buddha’s advice: that we cultivate a heart of lovingkindness as we listen to others or converse with them. We begin by directing lovingkindness to the speaker, and then gradually extend our sphere of lovingkindness to include more beings until our heart encompasses the whole universe, that is, the totality of our consciousness.¹⁵

The following 5 parables illustrate how *lovingkindness* should be cultivated. **The Mahā Rāhul’ovāda Sutta** (M 62) contains a related set of five lovingkindness cultivations called the “element-like meditations.” These practice are done by first reflecting on the positive qualities of earth, water, fire, wind and space, that is, they are each “not troubled, ashamed, or disgusted”¹⁶ even though they are in contact with “things clean and foul.” The meditator internalizes such qualities so that “agreeable and disagreeable contacts that have arisen (within) will not overpower the mind and remain.”¹⁷

The five parables of the Kakacūpama Sutta [§§12, 14, 16, 18, 20], examined below, are simpler compared to the more systematic *element-like meditations* given in the Mahā Rāhul’ovāda Sutta. As such, these parables are likely to be older methods.

1.5.1 Parable: Trying to dig up the earth [§§12-13]. In the 1st parable, illustrating lovingkindness cultivation, we visualize ourselves to be like the earth (the dirt, not “the element”). A person might try to dig it all up so that it is no more, but no matter how long he might try to do this, it is not possible. The earth will always be here, as it were. Even so, no matter how others speak to us (try to dig us up), we will remain stable and uncomplaining, like the earth, cultivating lovingkindness.

1.5.2 Parable: Trying to draw pictures in space [§§14-15]. In the 2nd parable, illustrating lovingkindness, we visualize ourselves to be like the space (or the air or the sky). A person might try to paint any colour or picture in space, but no matter how long he might try to do this, it is not possible. Space will always be here, as it were. Even so, no matter how others speak to us (try to paint us up), we will remain stable and uncomplaining, like space, cultivating lovingkindness.

1.5.3 Parable: Trying to burn up the Ganges with a grass-torch [§§16-17]. In the 3rd parable, illustrating lovingkindness, we visualize ourselves to be like a huge river (or body of water). A person might try to burn up the river with a torch, but no matter how long he might try to do this, it is not possible. The river or water will always be here, as it were. Even so, no matter how others speak to us (try to burn us up), we will remain stable and uncomplaining, like the river or water, cultivating lovingkindness.

1.5.4 Parable: Trying to rustle a catskin bag [§§18-19]. In the 4th parable, illustrating lovingkindness, we visualize ourselves to be like a very soft furry bag. A person might try to scrub or strike it, but no matter how long he might try to do this, the soft furry bag does not rustle. The furry bag remains ever soft and silent. It will always be so, as it were. Even so, no matter how others speak to us (try to rough us up), we will remain stable and uncomplaining, like a soft furry bag, cultivating lovingkindness.

1.5.5 Parable of the saw [§§20-21]

1.5.5.1 This is one of the most famous Buddhist parables, and its significance is highlighted by the fact that it concludes the discourse after which it is named, the Kakacūpama Sutta.

¹⁵ For more details instructions, see *Brahma, vihāra*, SD 38.5 (2.1.3) & (3).

¹⁶ “Is not pained, humiliated, disgusted,” *aṭṭhīyati vā harāyati vā jigucchati vā*. For fuller analyses of these terms, see *Kevalāḍḍha S* (D 11,5/1:213), SD 1.7 n, sv.

¹⁷ M 62,13-17/1:424 f, SD 3.11.

Bhikshus, even if low-down thieves were to cut you up from limb to limb with a double-handled saw, whoever were to defile your mind with anger, is there by not a doer of my teaching.

[§20]

The reasons for this are not difficult to fathom. Assuming such a terrible predicament were to occur, the victim would surely die. Then, he should fill his mind with lovingkindness so that his dying moments are wholesome. Hence, he would attain a good rebirth; and if he were to have regularly reflected on impermanence, he would even attain streamwinning.¹⁸

1.5.5.2 Interestingly, the Commentary says that “whoever” (*yo*) here refers to “either a monk or a nun” (MA 2:100). Perhaps, the Commentator feels that such great patience must be very difficult for the laity, but is a vital part of a monastic personal training. This is not far-fetched as a similar teaching of *complete non-violence in a Dharma teacher* is given to the monk Puṇṇa before he returns to his hostile homeland of Suṇāparanta [2.2.2].

1.5.5.3 It should also be noted that the parable of the saw, as the Sutta’s conclusion, is also different from all its other parables. The parable of the saw stands alone in teaching monastics to practise complete non-violence in the face of every challenge, even violence of the worst kind, such as being carved from limb to limb with a double-handled saw by low-down robbers! Even under such circumstances, a monastic should show lovingkindness to his persecutors. If he has such courage and patience, then he is ready to truly spread the Dharma.

1.5.5.4 Although the Commentary suggests that the teaching of the saw parable applies to monastics only [1.5.5.2], the message of patience and non-violence applies to the laity, too. These are, of course, ideal conditions in the case of the laity who are usually busy with worldly affairs so that it is more difficult for them to show such great patience and non-violence. Nevertheless, such qualities, when and where they are properly practised, are the conditions for personal development and mental cultivation. Fortunately, under normal circumstances, it is not regularly that low-down thieves would saw us in half with a double-handled saw!

2 Related suttas

2.1 THE KAKACÛPAMA SUTTA’S LOCATION. The Kakacûpama Sutta, the “discourse on the parable of the saw,” is the first discourse of the Majjhima Nikāya’s third chapter, which the Burmese, Siamese and Sinhala editions entitled “the chapter on parables (or similes)” (*opamma vagga*).¹⁹ This is of course very apt as nine out of the ten suttas in this chapter prominently employ parables and similes.²⁰

The titles of the Majjhima chapters (*vagga*) as a rule, reflect their respective contents, sometimes being named after its first or first two suttas.²¹ European scholars, such as **I B Horner** (1954:xi f), have noted

¹⁸ See **Entering the stream**, SD 3.3.

¹⁹ M:Be 1:173,1, M:Ce 1:308,4, M:Se 1:248,1 (adopted by Neumann 1896:143, and Chalmers 1926:x, perhaps following him). Ee (the PTS ed) simply entitles it “the third chapter” (*tatiya, vagga*). See Intro (2.1).

²⁰ The 10 titles are Kakacûpama S (M 21, “the saw”), Alaggadûpama S (M 22, “the water-snake”), Vammîka S (M 23, “the anthill”), Ratha,vinîta S (M 24, “the relay of chariots”), Nivāpa S (M 25, the crops”), [Ariya Pariyesanā S (M 26, “the noble quest”)], Cūḷa Hatthi, padôpama S (M 27, “the lesser elephant foot-print”), Mahā Hatthi, padôpama S (M 28, “the greater elephant foot-print”), Mahā Sārôpama S (M 29, “the greater pith”), and Cūḷa Sārôpama S (M 30, “the lesser pith”).

²¹ The titles of the Majjhima chapters (*vagga* = Vg), arranged in 3 sets of “fifties” (*paññāsaka*), ie, 50 suttas (the last has 52), are as follows: The First Fifty (*mūla,paññāsa*): (1) Mūla,pariyāya Vg*; (2) Sīha,nāda Vg*; (3) Opamma Vg

the anomaly here: all the other Majjhima chapters have their own names, except this “third chapter” (in the PTS edition). **K R Norman** notes that “since six of the ten suttas have the word *upama* in their title,” it would indeed be “appropriate to call it [the Tatiya Vagga] Opammavagga.” (1983:45 f).

2.2 RELATED PALI SUTTAS

2.2.1 The Kalāra Sutta. The Moliya Phagguna Sutta (S 12.12) records a series of questions that Phagguna asks the Buddha, which he rejects as wrongly put (*no kallo pañho*).²² **The Kalāra Sutta** (S 12.32) reports that, in due course, Phagguna returns to lay life.²³ The Commentary to the Kalāra Sutta records venerable Sāriputta as explaining to the monk Kalāra Khattiya that Phagguna left the order because he found no solace (*assāsa*) in monkhood, meaning that he was overwhelmed by sensual pleasures, since he had not attained any of the 3 lower paths (that is, streamwinning, once-return or non-return).²⁴

Phagguna, in other words, is not amenable to the Buddha’s teaching. Despite his indisposition, the Buddha still instructs him regarding how he should correct himself. His own unwillingness to learn prevents him from stepping into the noble path. Yet the Buddha’s teaching is never wasted. There are always attentive ears, willing and able to benefit from the Buddha Word. Because of the Buddha’s wise generosity in teaching, we now still have the benefit of the suttas before us, so that we only need to internalize them ourselves.

2.2.2 The Buddha’s advice to Punna. In the Kakacūpama Sutta, the Buddha begins his instruction to Phagguna [§6] by using the model of “a graduated scale of ill-treatment” [1.2.2]. The most famous application of this model by the Buddha is found in **the Puṇṇ’ovāda Sutta** (M 145), the discourse on his advice to the monk Puṇṇa of Sunāparanta. After his ordination, Puṇṇa finds the area around Sāvattthī unconducive for his meditation and wishes to return to his home country to continue his practice. He approaches the Buddha to obtain guidance (by way of a brief teaching) before leaving. The Buddha gives him the teaching recorded in the Puṇṇ’ovāda Sutta (M 145,2-4).

Puṇṇa is made aware of what may lie in store for him when he returns to Sunāparanta where the people are fierce and rough. Such people might scold or insult him; hit him with clods of earth; or strike him with a rod; or attack him with a sharp weapon; or even take his life:

Bhante, if the people of Sunāparanta were to take my life with a sharp knife, then I shall think thus: “There have been disciples of the Blessed One, who being repelled and disgusted by the body and by life, have resorted to a knife-bringer.²⁵ But I have not sought the knife: it is the knife

(or Tatiya Vg); (4) Mahā Yamaka Vg (“the greater pairs”); (5) Cūḷa Yamaka Vg (“the lesser pairs”); The Middle Fifty (*majjhima paññāsa*); (6) Gahapati Vg (“the householders”); (7) Bhikkhu Vg (“the monks”); (8) Paribbājaka Vg (“the wanderers”); (9) Rāja Vg (“king”); (10) Brāhmaṇa Vg (“brahmins”); The Final Fifty (*upari paññāsa*); (11) Deva,daha Vg*; (12) Anupada Vg*; (13) Suññata Vg*; (14) Vibhaṅga Vg (“analyses”); (15) Saḷāyatana Vg (“the six sense-bases”). A terminal asterisk (*) means that the *vagga* title reflects its first or first two titles suttas.

²² S 12.12/2:12-14 @ SD 20.5.

²³ S 12.32/2:50 @ SD 83.6.

²⁴ SA 2:62; SAṬ:Be 2:73.

²⁵ *Santi kho Bhagavato sāvakā kāyena ca jīvitena ca aṭṭiyamānā jigucchamānā yeva sattha,hārakam pariyesanti.* I have rendered *sattha,hāraka* lit as “knife-bringer,” referring to someone who provides the opportunity for suicide, rather than the more specific “assassin,” as sometimes tr. This passage alludes to the strange case of the suicide monks (V 3:68-70; S 54.9/5:320-322): cf S:B 1951 nn299, 301. However, cf Pārājika 3 (V 3:73) which MA 5:85 cites. See **Chann’ovāda S** (M 114), SD 11.12.

that has sought me!” Thus will I then think of them, Blessed One; thus will I then think of them,
Sugata [well-farer]. (M 145,5/3:268)²⁶

His reply to the Buddha’s final question reflects his spiritual attainment, which endows him with such courage as not to fear even death itself. It reflects his total readiness for the Dharma mission even in a very hostile and violent place.

2.3 ĀGAMA PARALLELS

2.3.1 MĀ 193. A Chinese parallel of the Kakacûpama Sutta is found in the Madhyama Āgama at MĀ 193 (T1.744a-746b), bearing the title “the discourse on Moliya Phagguna,” 牟犁破群那經, *Mù Lí Pò Qún Nà jīng*, which also gives the same venue of Jeta’s Grove near Sāvattihī.²⁷ Both versions agree in stating that the Buddha, having summoned Phagguna, reminds him that he is a renunciant, who has left behind the household life, and as such he should also leave behind sensual thinking of a householder.

The Pali version, however, stands alone in stating the possibility of the nuns or Phagguna being verbally abused [§6.3] and physically attacked [§6.5], Phagguna should, in either case, remain unaffected by cultivating lovingkindness. The Madhyama Āgama version mentions the same parables of the chariot [§7.5],²⁸ the well-tended sal grove [§8],²⁹ and the slave-woman Kālī [§9].

Similarly, both the Pali and Chinese versions agree in next dealing with the 5 courses of speech. We should not be affected in any way from how others speak to us, without reacting negatively but keep our hearts boundless in lovingkindness.³⁰ Both texts then say that we then go on to cultivate lovingkindness boundlessly in all directions. The Chinese versions, however, also adds other details.

While the Pali version only briefly mentions the cultivation of lovingkindness centering around the phrase, “we will dwell pervading the whole world” (*sabbavantam lokam...pharivā*), the Chinese version presents it with greater details as found elsewhere in the suttas, describing the radiation of *all* the four divine abodes in each of the four directions, above, below, pervading the whole world, and to the self.³¹

The Chinese version, in other words, *adds on* the other three divine abodes of compassion, gladness and equanimity. From the Sutta context, the single mention of lovingkindness suffices, as the Buddha is speaking of a social situation, and not an actual meditation sitting. Very likely, the translator of the Chinese version had familiarity with the full divine abodes practice and felt that the whole set should be mentioned.

Both the Pali and Chinese versions then compare the steadiness or unshakability of lovingkindness to the parables of trying to dig up the earth [§12], of trying to draw pictures in space [§14], of trying to burn up the Ganges with a grass-torch [§16], and of trying to rustle a catskin bag [§18]. They only differ in their sequence. In the Chinese version, the second and the third parables are switched around. Both versions agree as regards the parable of the saw [2.3.3].

²⁶ More fully, see M 145,5-6/3:268 + SD 20.15 (4.2).

²⁷ For an extract from MĀ 193, see Thich Minh Chau 1964:198 f.

²⁸ The chariot parable: the Chinese version (MĀ 193 @ T7.48b,15-16) gives a simpler version (Thich Minh Chau 1991:198 f.

²⁹ The well-tended sal grove: the Chinese version (MĀ 193 @ T7.48b16-19) gives a more detailed version (Thich 1991:198).

³⁰ M 21,11.3/1:126 & MĀ 193 (T1.745a29).

³¹ MĀ 193 @ T1.745b6. See also **Tevijja S** (D 13,76-79/1:250 f), SD 1.8; for more refs, see **Brahma, vihāra**, SD 38.5 (2.1.3.1).

2.3.2 EĀ 50.8. A partial Chinese parallel of the Kakacūpama Sutta is found in the Ekottara Āgama, in EĀ 50.8 (T2.812c-813b), which opens in a similar way. In EĀ 50.8, however, he proclaims his conviction that sensual pleasure is not an obstruction to spiritual progress, similar to the monk Ariṭṭha's view as recorded in **the Alagaddūpama Sutta** (M 22)³² and its parallel in MĀ 200 (T1.763b4).

The rest of EĀ 50.8 recounts the Buddha's rejection of the wrong view and the famous parable of the water-snake (making this section of EĀ 50.8 a partial parallel to M 22). Anesaki notes a reference to "the discourse to Phaggunā," 破群那經, *Pò Qún Nà Jīng*, in the *Mahā,prajñā.pāramitā,(upadeśa)śāstra.³³

2.3.3 Other Āgama parallels. The **Kaḷāra Sutta** (S 12.32) reports, in due course, Phaggunā returns to lay life³⁴ [2.2.1]. The same is recorded in an Āgama parallel at MĀ 23 (T1.451a3). The famous parable of the saw is alluded to in **the Mahā Hatthi, padōpama Sutta** (M 28)³⁵ and its Chinese parallels at MĀ 30,³⁶ and also in the Chinese *Mahā,vibhāṣā (T 1545).³⁷

3 The Sutta's significance in our times

3.1 PATIENCE AND NON-VIOLENCE IN PROBLEM-SOLVING

3.1.0 Roots of the human problem. Ironically, a highly significant number of wars and tragic violence throughout human history have been done in the name of religion.³⁸ Even Buddhism, especially well-organized and urbanized temples, such as those in China, Korea, Japan and Tibet, had been involved in some kind of warfare or social violence (although not as widespread as in the case of the God-religions).³⁹ Even Buddhists, in moments of unmindfulness or instigation, might sometimes fall into words or acts of violence. The question here is how applicable is the Kakacūpama Sutta's teaching of patience and non-violence to us today?

Violence would occur as long as the roots of greed, hate and delusion are uncontrolled. On a basic level, we therefore need to understand the nature of these unwholesome roots⁴⁰ and the cultivation of moral virtue.⁴¹ In our quest for basic needs, especially if we live in an urbanized society, we are often faced with various challenges. Besides making our own choices of activities and work, we have to deal with the unpredictable conduct of other people. How we respond to such challenges depend vitally on how well trained we are emotionally and spiritually.

3.1.1 Defining the problem. The purpose of Buddhist living is to produce wholesome individuals. There is a fourfold reality model for this, that is, the training for Dharma-based individuation or wholesome individual. The first step towards individuation is for us to hone some basic skills in defining or assessing our current situation (immediate, short-term or long-term).

Exploitation and violence are common occurrences in our societies. There are different ways of looking at the problem, the most universal of which is *the political*. Such an approach might be in the "power"

³² M 22,2/1:130,5 (SD 3.13).

³³ T 1509 = T25.60a7: Anesaki (1934:290). Cf Lamotte 1944:32.

³⁴ S 12.32/2:50 (SD 83.6).

³⁵ M 28,9/1:186,11 = M 28,24/1:189,24.

³⁶ MĀ 30 @ T1.465a6; cf EĀ 497 @ T2.120a23.

³⁷ T1545 @ T27.190a28.

³⁸ See eg **The Three Roots Inc**, SD 31.12 (5.3 & 3.2).

³⁹ See eg Brian Victoria, *Zen at War*, 1997 & 2006: <http://www.buddhistchannel.tv/index.php?id=10,8923,0,0,1,0>

⁴⁰ On the 3 unwholesome roots, see (**Akusala Mūla**) **Añña Titthiyā S** (A 3.68/1:199-201) + SD 16.4.

⁴¹ On moral virtue as part of the 3 trainings, see **Sīla samādhi paññā**, SD 21.6.

mode. Here, however, we shall examine things from a spiritual perspective, that is, in the *love mode*. This “problem” approach is based on a proper understanding and acceptance of what are called “the 5 values” of life, happiness, freedom, truth and the mind.

Whatever problem we face, whether personal or social, must be analysed and evaluated in the light of the five basic values. To what extent does the problem threaten *life*? How does it affect our *happiness*? To what extent does it limit *freedom*? How *truthful* is the assessment of the problem? What effect does this problem have on *the mind*? There are no ready-made or prescribed answers. Each problem or situation must be dealt with on its own.

3.1.2 Identifying the conditions. Although there might be a trigger for any problem, this is only the proximate or latest phase when we begin to notice or experience its effects or significance. We need to examine the network and chains of conditions that work to produce what we see as the problem at hand. Even if we can identify a few key conditions, none of them can be truly seen as the actual first or only cause of the problem. A problem, in other words, is not a person or a thing, but a pattern of events or related conditions.

The conditions work together to produce the problem. The problem itself is a set of conditions that effects each person in a different way. How such effects work on us must be evaluated. Such effects can be lessened or worsened, depending on our level of greed, hate, delusion or fear. Our emotional conditions have to be personally evaluated and addressed.

3.1.3 Envisioning the solution. A problem-free situation can and must be envisioned. In other words, ideally, every possible solution must be examined. This is the opposite of the problem situation, where all of the contributing conditions or the key ones have been removed or neutralized. It is a situation where life is protected and cherished, where happiness is possible and enjoyable, where freedom flourishes, where the truth prevails, and where the mind can freely develop and is at peace.

On a more profound level, we have overcome (at least for the moment) our greed towards the object that contributed to the problem. We have removed the hate or negative attitude towards those who have been identified as the “causes” of the problem. We have cleared away our delusion that there was a single cause of the problem. And we have alleviated the fear that such a problem would recur, or that if it does, we would surely know what to do.

3.1.4 Applying the method. The solution to the problem is the removal of the key conditions that underlie the problem. To succeed in working at the solution, we must first be physically prepared for the task. We need to ensure our having good health and a clear mind. Secondly, the methods we use and the moves we make must be morally proper (that is, it does not at least irreparably harm self, others or the environment).

The stages of working at the solution must each be carefully prepared, executed and then evaluated. Any difficulty must be examined and addressed. Any failure must be evaluated and alternatives worked out. If a difficulty or failure seems insurmountable, we need to work at what to do next. In special situations, we need the wisdom simply to be patient and carefully study the situation so that we can act appropriately.

The effects of the problem must be addressed, too. This is best done by responding to how each person is affected by the problem. Those affected the worst should be helped first where feasible. No one should be personally blamed for the problem. Yet each of us must understand how we could have prevented the problem so that it does not recur, or to be able to lessen the negative effects whenever it should recur.

One of the truly vital benefits of patience and non-violence in problem-solving is that we are in a better position to keep our options open, that is, of not reactively jumping into wrong conclusions, and so

worsening the situation. Patience and non-violence give us valuable space for emotional strategy so that our best qualities can be expressed and the best solutions effected. Such a strategy is clearly a good way of making friends than would impatience and violence.

In other words, we should be constantly reminded that the Buddha's teaching is that of the *noble* eightfold path. It is so called because it *ennobles* us. To be ennobled means to see dignity within ourselves, that is, a natural propensity for goodness, and to see in others that same dignity, and to do so with joy. The happy and dignified are far away from bad.

3.2 THE CATHOLIC POPE'S APOLOGIES. John Paul II, in his later years as the Pope of the Roman Catholics, made several apologies to various peoples who had been violated and wronged by the Catholic Church through the centuries. Even before becoming the Pope, he was a prominent supporter of initiatives like the Letter of Reconciliation of the Polish Bishops to the German Bishops⁴² from 1965.

During his papacy, he publicly made **apologies** for over a hundred of these wrong-doings, including the following:

- The persecution of the Italian scientist and philosopher Galileo Galilei in the trial in 1633 (31 Oct 1992).
- Catholic involvement with the African slave trade (9 Aug 1993).
- The Church Hierarchy's role in burnings at the stake and the religious wars that followed the Protestant Reformation (May 1995, in the Czech Republic).
- The injustices committed against women in the name of Christ, the violation of women's rights and for the historical denigration of women (10 July 1995, in a letter to "every woman").
- Inactivity and silence of some Roman Catholics during the Holocaust (16 March 1998).
- For the execution of Jan Hus⁴³ in 1415 (18 December 1999, in Prague). When John Paul II visited Prague in 1990s, he requested experts in this matter "to define with greater clarity the position held by Jan Hus among the Church's reformers, and acknowledged that "independently of the theological convictions he defended, Hus cannot be denied integrity in his personal life and commitment to the nation's moral education." It was another step in building a bridge between Catholics and Protestants.
- For the sins of Catholics throughout the ages for violating "the rights of ethnic groups and peoples, and [for showing] contempt for their cultures and religious traditions". (12 March 2000, during a public Mass of Pardons).
- For the sins of the Crusader attack on Constantinople in 1204. (4 May 2001, to the Patriarch of Constantinople).
- For missionary abuses in the past against indigenous peoples of the South Pacific (22 November 2001, via the Internet).
- For the massacre of Aztecs and other Mesoamericans by the Spanish⁴⁴ in the name of the Church.

No Pope in the Middle Ages, or even in pre-modern times, would even think of such a conciliatory gesture. Indeed, surely not all the cardinals today supported such a move. After all, is not the church always right in its actions. Secretive canonical legislations, such as the Crimen Sollicitationis ("the crime of

⁴² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Letter_of_Reconciliation_of_the_Polish_Bishops_to_the_German_Bishops.

⁴³ Hus was a Czech priest, philosopher, reformer, and master at Charles University in Prague. After John Wycliffe, the theorist of ecclesiastical Reformation, Hus was the first actual Church reformer, and who was followed by other reformers like Luther, Calvin and Zwingli. By the mid-16th cent, most Czechs followed the teachings of Hus and his successors.

⁴⁴ For example, in 1532, the Spanish conquistador Pizarro and his force of only 106 foot-soldiers and 62 horsemen (both mostly Dutch), but with arquebuses (matchlock guns), crossbows, steel armours and swords), massacred the Incas, and conquered some 80,000 native warriors, armed only with primitive weapons. For a re-enactment, see Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel*, 1997: <http://topdocumentaryfilms.com/guns-germs-and-steel/> (no 2 "Conquest.")

soliciting”), which are “to be kept carefully in the secret archive of the Curia for internal use,” upheld the supremacy of the “church” so that even cases of widespread and repeated clerical abuse of minors over many decades, even centuries, in their care were not to be publicly disclosed, so that the victims were deprived of justice and healing.⁴⁵

Surely, there is some goodness, even contrition, in a person who is willing to publicly own up and feel remorse for a wrong committed. On the other, no organization of power such as the church, would be naive enough not to know that such a gesture is also good for public relations in a time when religion has lost much of its powers and relevance to a freer and better informed society and world. Yet the existence of such documents as the *Crimen Sollicitationis*, even though it is an obscure document, clearly testifies to the fact that religious power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.⁴⁶

3.3 BEING RELIGIOUSLY WHOLESOME

3.3.1 No secret teachings. The Buddha, in his last days, makes this highly significant statement, as recorded in the *Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta* (D 16):

Ānanda, what does the order of monks expect of me? I have taught the Dharma, Ānanda, making no distinction between inner and outer:⁴⁷ the Tathagata has no “guru’s fist”⁴⁸ in respect of teachings.
(D 16,2.25.1/2:100), SD 9

The Buddha has openly taught what needs to be taught, and there are no secret Buddhist teachings. There are also no secrets in the conduct and teaching of the Buddha’s awakened disciples, whether monastic or lay. After all, the Buddha’s teaching is called the Dharma, the highest truth that is liberating. The truth, in other words, must reflect reality, and this transparency allows direct vision that defines spiritual liberation.

However, there are monastic rules, such as Pācittiya 9,⁴⁹ that forbids any mention of a monk’s or nun’s offence to the unordained. This is not a rule of “secrecy,” as it is to allow the sangha to properly

⁴⁵ The secret document instructs bishops on how to deal with priests who solicit sex from the confessionals, and “any obscene external act ... with youths or either sex.” It imposes an oath of secrecy on the child victim, the priest dealing with the allegation and any witnesses. Breaking the oath means excommunication from the Catholic Church. See <http://www.bishop-accountability.org/resources/resource-files/churchdocs/CrimenEnglish.pdf>; see also: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/panorama/5392338.stm>.

⁴⁶ This last sentence is based on a famous quote by Lord Acton. On his response to the doctrine of the pope’s infallibility, see *Wanderers of today*, SD 24.6b (4.4).

⁴⁷ Comys: “Making no distinction between inner and outer,” *anantaram abāhiraṃ karitvā*. Comys explain it as making no distinction of either inner or outer by way of the Dharma or by way of persons. Making an ‘inner’ of the Dharma means to teach, thinking, ‘This much Dharma I will not teach others.’ Making an ‘outer’ of the Dharma means to teach, thinking, ‘I will teach this much to others.’ Making an ‘inner’ of the person means to teach, thinking, ‘I will teach this person.’ Making an ‘outer’ of the person means to teach, thinking, ‘I will not teach this (person).’ Thus he teaches without making a distinction. This is the meaning.” (DA 2:547 = SA 3:203). On these twofold distinction, see Miln 1145 f, 159 f. See foll n.

⁴⁸ *N’atthi ācariya, muṭṭhi*. Comys: “The guru’s fist is found amongst outsiders who do not tell certain things to their pupils when they are still boys (*dahara, kāle*), who keep certain teachings for their beloved and favourite pupils, telling it to them only at the last moment from their deathbed. The Tathāgata does not hold back anything, keeping a closed fist, thinking, ‘I will teach this in my old age, at the last moment.’” (DA 2:548 = SA 3:203 f)

⁴⁹ Pāc 9: “If any monk should announce a monk’s gross offence to one who is not ordained, other than with the consensus of the monks, there is an offence entailing expiation” (*yo pana bhikkhu bhikkhussa duṭṭhullaṃ āpattim anupasampanassa āroceyya aññatra bhikkhu, sammutiyā pācittiyam*) (V 4:31). Here “gross offence” (*duṭṭhulla āpat-*

rehabilitate the offender and not to make the monastic offence bigger than what it is. However, there is no rule at all stating that the laity should not know about the Vinaya or discuss it. Indeed, many of the Vinaya rules were introduced by the Buddha on account of the laity complaining about the improper conduct of the monastics. As such, it is greatly helpful if the laity are well informed of the monastic rules so that laity would not act in any way to encourage the monastics to transgress any of them.

The Buddhist sangha is not a uniformed body or power structure. The monastic robes and lifestyle are a symbol of renunciation, not of status or power. Monastics give due respect to one another according to their seniority, that is, the number of “rains” (*vassa*), they have observed. Even then, this is not a vow of obedience but of mutual respect so that there is social order and harmony in the sangha.

3.3.2 Confession. The suttas give accounts of both monastics and the lay, on realizing their offences (unintentional or intentional), seeking forgiveness from the Buddha or senior monks.⁵⁰ Although monastics make formal confessions of ecclesiastical offences before one another, the laity are not bounden to do so. “Confession” here means an acknowledging of one’s bad conduct or omission before the community (formally or before another monastic). There is no “absolution of evil,” as such a concept is not found in early Buddhism.

Buddhist confession essentially reflects an understanding of Buddhist training and the desire for it, that is, that of keeping ourselves *morally virtuous* as a support for *mental development* and the attaining of *wisdom*. In the case of an ecclesiastical offence, the monastic would approach another monk for formal confession. If a monastic has offended a lay person, it is wise of the monastic to apologise to that person in a proper way. So, too, if a lay person has conducted himself improperly with regards to a monastic, he should apologise to him or her in a proper manner.

Furthermore, a monastic or a lay person who is remorseful of some personal wrong he has done may approach a wise and compassionate Dharma-minded teacher (monastic or lay) for advice or counselling. Such a confession functions as an apology (to those whom we respect) and reaffirmation (to ourselves that we have the potential to be better). The fact thus remains that it is a full and wholesome acceptance of our own self-worth capable of spiritual liberation, and to see the same potential in others.⁵¹

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ti) means the 4 defeats (*pārājika*) and 13 *saṅgh’ādi,sesa* rules. For these rules, see *The Pāṭimokkha* (ed W Pruitt; tr K R Norman, 2001) & <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/vin/sv/bhikkhu-pati.html>.

⁵⁰ The most famous confession is that of king Ajāta, sattu before the Buddha (**Sāmañña,phala S**, D 2,99 f/1:87), SD 8.10.

⁵¹ For technical details on monastic confession, see Vajirañāṇavarorasa 1969:202 f & 1973:155161; Ṭhānissaro 1996:542-544. See also **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,101.2-103/1:85) + SD 8.10 (5).

Kakacûpama Sutta

The Discourse on the Parable of the Saw

M 21

1 Thus have I heard.⁵²

At one time the Blessed One was staying in Anātha,piṇḍika's park in Jeta's grove near Sāvathī.

Moliya Phagguna is intimate with the nuns

2 Now at that time, the venerable **Moliya Phagguna** was dwelling too intimately⁵³ with **the nuns**.⁵⁴

This was how intimate the venerable Moliya Phagguna was with the nuns:

if anyone should speak ill of the nuns before him, he would disapprove and be angry, and make an issue⁵⁵ of it;⁵⁶

if anyone should speak ill of the venerable Moliya Phagguna before the nuns, they would disapprove and be angry, and make an issue of it.

The venerable Moliya Phagguna dwelt in intimacy with the nuns.⁵⁷

3 Then a certain monk approached the Blessed One. Having saluted the Blessed One, he sat down at one side. Seated thus at one side, he said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, the venerable Moliya Phagguna *dwells too intimately with the nuns*.

This is how intimate the venerable Moliya Phagguna is with the nuns:

if anyone should speak ill of the nuns before him, he would disapprove and be angry, and make an issue of it;

if anyone should speak ill of the venerable Moliya Phagguna before the nuns, they would disapprove and be angry, and make an issue of it.

This is how the venerable Moliya Phagguna *dwells intimately with the nuns!*”⁵⁸

The Buddha summons Moliya Phagguna

4 Then the Blessed One addressed a certain monk,

“Come now, [123] bhikkhu, summon the monk Moliya Phagguna with these words of mine:

‘The teacher, avuso Phagguna, summons you!’”

⁵² D Comy says that **Kakacûpama S** (M 21) is a sutta taught on account of someone's lack of patience (DA 123).

⁵³ “Too intimately” (*ativelā*), “passing the proper limit, excessively, improper, unseasonable” (CPD) (**adj**) S 1:210,-11*, Sn 973; (**adv**) D 1:19,12; M 1:122,14; A 3:259,8; S 1:201,17, 2:268,22; U 75,9; J 1:432,12* 6:100,10*, 295,20*, 388,30*, 472,21*, 475,18*, 555,11*. Comy lists 3 “limits” (*velā*): (1) time (*kāla*~), (2) border (*sīmā*~) and (3) precept (*sīla*~). Phagguna infringes all 3: he exhorts nuns until late in the evening, for too long at a time, and in more than 5 or 6 sentences (V 4:21, 55); and he also speaks in fun of serious offences (*duṭṭhull'āpatti,pahonaka*) (MA 2:95). Cf V 4:31, 127.

⁵⁴ *Tena kho pana samayena āyasmā moliya,phagguno bhikkhunīhi saddhim ativelam saṃsaṭṭho viharati.*

⁵⁵ *Adhikaraṇa*, as tt, “legal question” (4 kinds, Cv 4.14 = V 2:88-104); but here used non-technically, simply meaning “issue, fuss, big deal.”

⁵⁶ *Sace koci bhikkhu āyasmato moliya,phaggunassa sammukhā tāsāṃ bhikkhunīnaṃ avaraṇaṃ bhāsati, ten'āyasmā moliya,phagguno kupito anattamano adhikaraṇam pi karoti.*

⁵⁷ *Saṃsaṭṭho āyasmā moliya,phagguno bhikkhunīhi saddhim viharati.*

⁵⁸ *Eva,samsaṭṭho āyasmā moliya,phagguno bhikkhunīhi saddhim viharatīti.*

“Yes, bhante,” replied the monk to the Blessed One, and he went up to the venerable Moḷiya Phaggu-
na, and said this to him:

‘The teacher, avuso Phagguna, summons you!’”

“Yes, avuso,” replied the venerable Moḷiya Phagguna to the monk. He approached the Blessed One,
saluted him, and then sat down at one side.

While he was seated thus at one side, the Blessed One said this to him:

5 “Now, Phagguna, is it true, it is said that you dwell too intimately with the nuns?

This is how intimately, Phagguna, it is said, that you dwell with the nuns:⁵⁹

‘If anyone should **speak ill of the nuns** before him, he would disapprove and be angry, and make an
issue of it;

if anyone should **speak ill of him** before the nuns, they would disapprove and be angry, and make an
issue of it.’

In this way, Phagguna, it is said that *you dwell intimately with the nuns*.”

“Yes, bhante.”

TEACHING PHAGGUNA

5.2 “Now, Phagguna, are you not a son of family who is **a renunciant**, gone forth out of faith from
home for the homeless life?”

“Yes, I am, bhante.”

6 “Phagguna, it is not proper for a son of family who is a renunciant, gone forth out of faith, from
home into the homeless life, to dwell so intimately with the nuns.⁶⁰

PACIFICISM TOWARDS THE NUNS (OTHERS) 1

6.2 Therefore, Phagguna, even if anyone were to speak ill of the nuns in your presence,⁶¹

on such an occasion, Phagguna, you should abandon any householder’s desire, any householder’s
thought.⁶²

6.3 On such an occasion, Phagguna, you should train yourself thus:

KEY PRACTICE 1: [§8.1]

‘My heart will *not* be perverted⁶³ in any way, nor shall I utter any bad⁶⁴ speech,

but I shall dwell with a heart of lovingkindness, moved by goodness, without a hating heart.’⁶⁵

⁵⁹ Note that the Buddha addresses Phagguna gently in the 3rd person.

⁶⁰ *Na kho te etaṃ, phagguna, patirūpaṃ kulaputtassa saddhā agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajitassa, yaṃ tvaṃ bhikkhunīhi saddhiṃ ativeლაṃ saṃsaṭṭho vihareyyāsi*. Here, “(were to) carry on” (**vihareyyāsi**) is idiomatic: although *viharati* (from which it is derived) means “to dwell,” here it simply means to conduct oneself habitually.

⁶¹ *Tasmātiha phagguna tava ce’pi koci sammukhā tāsāṃ bhikkhunīnaṃ avaṇṇaṃ bhāseyya. Tasmātiha* (“there-
fore, then”) can be resolved as *tasmā’ti ha* or *tasmā-t-ihā*.

⁶² *Tatrā’pi tvaṃ phagguna ye gehasitā chandā ye gehasitā vitakkā te pajaheyyāsi*. On the Buddha’s advice here, cf **Puṇṇ’ovāda S** (M 145,5-6/3:268), SD 20.15.

⁶³ “**Unperverted**,” *na ... vipariṇataṃ*. Comy explains *vipariṇata* as meaning that the mind (*citta*) can be perverted by being lustful, or hateful, or deluded, but that “here however either being lustful on account of lustful desire or being angry on account of a hateful mind” (*idha pana taṇhā, chanda, vasena rattāṃ, paṭigha, chanda, vasena duṭṭham pi vaṭṭati*, MA 2:96).

⁶⁴ Cousins, in his review of M:ÑB notes that *pāpa* is “rendered by all as ‘evil,’ but it is unlikely that such a concept had developed at this time. The meaning is something like ‘ill-fortuned.’” (1997:270). This certainly reflects the situation in a western or westernized situation (esp on account of Christian presence). However, anyone familiar with religious studies is likely to understand and accept that every religion has its terminology that should be understood in its own context. For a discussion, see **Beyond good and evil**, SD 18.7 (3).

This is how you, Phagguna, should train yourself.

PACIFICISM TOWARDS THE NUNS (OTHERS) 2

6.4 Therefore, Phagguna, even if anyone, in your presence, were to strike **those nuns** with the hand, or hurl a clod of earth at them, or hit them with a stick, or strike them with a weapon,⁶⁶— [§6.8]

on such an occasion, Phagguna, *you should abandon any householder's desire, any householder's thought.*

6.5 In this connection, Phagguna, you should train yourself thus:

'My heart will not be perverted in any way, nor shall I utter any bad speech, but I shall dwell with a heart of lovingkindness, moved by goodness, without a hating heart.' [§6.3]

This is how you, Phagguna, should train yourself.

PACIFICISM TOWARDS ONESELF 1

6.6 Therefore, Phagguna, even if anyone were to speak ill of **you** to your face,⁶⁷

on such an occasion, Phagguna, *you should abandon any householder's desire, any householder's thought.*

6.7 In this connection, Phagguna, you should train yourself thus:

'My heart will not be perverted in any way, nor shall I utter any bad speech, but I shall dwell with a heart of lovingkindness, moved by goodness, without a hating heart.' [§6.3]

This is how you, Phagguna, should train yourself.

PACIFICISM TOWARDS ONESELF 2

6.8 Therefore, Phagguna, even if anyone were to strike **you** with the hand, or hurl a clod of earth at you, or hit you with a stick, or strike you with a weapon⁶⁸— [124]

on such an occasion, Phagguna, *you should abandon any householder's desire, any householder's thought.*

6.9 In this connection, Phagguna, you should train yourself thus:

'My heart will not be perverted in any way, nor shall I utter any bad speech, but I shall dwell with a heart of lovingkindness, moved by goodness, without a hating heart.' [§6.3]

6.10 This is how you, Phagguna, should train yourself.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ *Na c'eva me cittaṃ vipariṇataṃ bhavissati, na ca pāpikaṃ vācaṃ nicchāressāmi, hitānukampī ca viharissāmi metta, citto, na dos'antarōti.* On "unperverted" (*na ... vipariṇataṃ*), see above. **Dos'antara** = *dosa* ("anger") + *antara* ("in between, in the midst") is idiomatic, meaning "inwardly hostile; activated by ill will" (DP, sv), prob "hidden hate": V 2:249,35; M 1:123,29; A 1:59,25; U 28,31; J 6:206*. Comy simply glosses "*na dos'antara* by 'I will not be hateful in my heart'" (*na dos'antaro'ti dosa, citto ba bhavissāmi*, MA 2:96). On the significance of this passage [§6], see Intro (1.2.2).

⁶⁶ *Tasmātiha, phagguna, tava ce'pi koci sammukhā tāsāṃ bhikkhunīnaṃ pāṇinā pahāraṃ dadeyya, leḍḍunā pahāraṃ dadeyya, daṇḍena pahāraṃ dadeyya, satthena pahāraṃ dadeyya.* According to Analayo, this section is only found here in the Pali canon, but nowhere in the Chin tr (2011:145).

⁶⁷ *Tasmātiha, phagguna, tava ce'pi koci sammukhā avaṇṇaṃ bhāseyya.*

⁶⁸ *Tasmātiha, phagguna, tava ce'pi koci pāṇinā pahāraṃ dadeyya, leḍḍunā pahāraṃ dadeyya, daṇḍena pahāraṃ dadeyya, satthena pahāraṃ dadeyya.* Note that *sammukhā* is omitted after *ce'pi koci* in all MSS.

⁶⁹ Note that Phagguna does not respond to the Buddha. In fact, he remains unresponsive for the rest of the Sutta. In the next section onwards, the Buddha addresses them assembled monks. See Intro (1.3.1).

TEACHING THE MONKS

The monks who take only one meal a day

7 The Blessed One then addressed **the monks**:

“Now, bhikkhus, there was a time when the monks pleased my heart.

7.2 Here, I addressed the monks thus,

‘Bhikkhus, I take only **a single-session meal**.⁷⁰ Taking a single-session meal, bhikkhus, I am free from illness and affliction, and enjoy health and strength, and dwell in comfort.⁷¹

7.3 Come now, bhikkhus, you, too, take only a single-session meal!

Taking *a single-session meal*, bhikkhus, you, too, will be free from illness and affliction, and enjoy health and strength, and dwell in comfort.’

7.4 There was no need of my instructing those monks, bhikkhus, I had only to rouse mindfulness in them.⁷²

Parable of the chariot and the skilled charioteer

7.5 “Suppose, bhikkhus, there were **a chariot on good level ground at a crossroads, harnessed to thoroughbreds, with a whip on a slant (in the holder) at the ready, so that a skilled charioteer, a trainer of tamable horses, might mount and, taking the reins in his left hand and the whip in his right, drive out and back, to whatever place and by whichever road he likes.**⁷³

Even so, bhikkhus, there was no need of my instructing those monks, bhikkhus; **I had only to rouse mindfulness in them.**

⁷⁰ “Single-session meal” (*ek’āsana, bhojana*). Comy says this is one of the 7 meals possible between dawn and noon (MA 2:97). This is one of the 13 strict ascetic practices (*dhutaṅga*) listed at Vism 2/59-83 (Dhutaṅga, niddesa); Miln ch 6. See **Bakkula S** (M 124) & SD 3.15 (2).

⁷¹ *Ek’āsana, bhojanam kho aham, bhikkhave, bhujjāmano appābādhatāñ ca sañjānāmi appātānkatañ ca lahu, tthānañ ca balañ ca phāsu, vihārañ ca*. This passage on the single-session almsmeal and its benefit occurs at **Kakacūpama S** (M 21,7.2/1:124), SD 38.1, **Bhaddāli S** (M 65,2/1:437), SD 56.2 & **Kīṭa, giri S** (M 70,4/1:473), SD 11.1. A shorter stock passage for asking after another’s health—“he asks whether (the other) is free from illness and affliction, enjoying health and strength, and dwelling in comfort,” *appābādham appātānkam lahu, tthānam balañ phāsu, vihāram pucchati*—is found at (**Ānanda**) **Subha S** (D 10,1.2/1:204), SD 401.13, = **Mahā.parinibbāna S** (D 16,1.2/-2:72), SD 9. In **Kīṭa, giri S** (M 70), the Buddha exhorts the monks to abstain from food at night (M 70,2/1:473), SD 11.1. On a modern explanation, see eg caloric restriction: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calorie_restriction.

⁷² *Na me, bhikkhave, tesu bhikkhūsu anusāsani karaṇiyā ahoṣi, sat’uppāda, karaṇiyam eva me, bhikkhave, tesu bhikkhūsu ahoṣi*. Comy: The Buddha says this because Phagguna still does not comply with his advice, but continues to resist him, so that the Buddha goes on to speak in praise of the compliant monks of his early ministry (MA 2:96 f).

⁷³ *Seyyathāpi bhikkhave subhūmiyaṃ cātum, mahā, pathe ājāñña, ratho yutto assa ṭhito odhastā, patodo, tam enaṃ dakkho yogg’ācariyo assa, damma, sārathi abhiruhitvā vāmena haṭṭhena rasmiyo gahetvā dakkhiṇena haṭṭhena patodaṃ gahetvā yen’icchakam, yad icchakam sāreyya pi paccāsāreyya pi*. *Paccāsāreyya* is opt of *paccāsāreti* (*paṭi + ā + sāreti*, caus of √SR, to flow), to make go (or turn) backward (M 1:124 = A 3:28 = Comy: *paṭinivatteti*): see PED, svv *paccāsāreti* & *paṭinivattati*. Parable recurs in **Kakacūpama S** (M 21,7.5/1:124), SD 38.1; **Kāya, gata, sati S** (M 119,31/-3:97), SD 12.21; **Rathōpama S** (S 35.239/4:176), SD 55.14; (**Samādhi**) **Pañc’aṅgika S** (A 5.28,14/3:28), SD 33.13. Cf a similar parable, that of the earth-mound at the crossroads: **Kimbila S** (S 54.10,22/5:325), SD 12.22.

Parable of the sal forest

8 KEY TEACHING 2 [§6.3]. Therefore, bhikshus, **abandon the unwholesome**. Devote yourselves to **cultivating wholesome states**.⁷⁴ For, that is how you will attain growth, abundance, full development in this Dharma Vinaya [teaching and discipline].

8.2 Suppose, bhikshus, there was a **great sal forest** not far from a village or market-town, and it were covered up by castor-oil plants.⁷⁵ Now, there was a man, desiring the good, the welfare, the freedom from the bondage⁷⁶ of those plants.

⁷⁷Having cut away the crooked⁷⁸ plants that sap vitality away⁷⁹ from the sal trees, he would throw them outside, and then clear up the interior of the forest. Then he would take good care of the sal plants so that they grow up straight and well. That is how, bhikshus, the sal forest would, in time, attain growth, abundance, full development.⁸⁰

8.3 Even so, bhikshus, abandon the unwholesome. **Devote yourselves to wholesome states. [125]** For, that is how you will attain growth, abundance, full development in this Dharma Vinaya [teaching and discipline].

Lady Vedehikā and her woman-slave Kālī

9 Once upon a time, bhikshus, in this very same Sāvattihī, there was a house lady [a householder's wife]⁸¹ named **Vedehikā**.⁸² Bhikshus, the house lady Vedehikā's good reputation has spread about, thus:⁸³

⁷⁴ *Kusalesu dhammesu āyogaṃ karotha*. Here *āyoga* is used fig, meaning "occupation, exercise, exertion, practice, cultivation," as in "and exertion in the higher mind [meditation]" (*adhicitte ca āyogo*, D 14.3.28/2:50,2* = U 4.6/-43,9* = Dh 185e = Tha 591c), which Comys explain as: "*adhicitta* means the higher mind that is regarded as the 8 attainments (the 4 form and 4 formless dhyanas)" (**Adhicitte'ti atṭha,samāpatti,saṅkhāte adhicitte. Āyogo'ti payoga,karaṇaṃ**, DhA 3:237), "devotion to cultivating the realization of the 7 attainments" (*atṭhannaṃ samāpattinaṃ adhigamāya bhāvanā'nuyogo*, UA 253), "the cultivation of calm and insight" (*samatha,vipassanāsu anuyogo bhāvanā*, ThaA 2:252); also V 2:135,29, 144,33*; M 1:124,27 (Comy is silent), 487,8 (Comy glosses as *payoga*, "preparation, undertaking, practice, action," MA 3:198).

⁷⁵ "Castor-oil plants," *elaṇḍa* (*Ricinus communis*), or perhaps a kind of creeper: mentioned only here, M 1:124,30; ~*kaṭṭha*, its stalk, M 2:152,8 ≈ 183,28); castor-oil plant (*Ricinus communis*), prob = *eraṇḍa* (ts) (Nc 409,23; J 2:440,-12, 440,26* 4:205,8*); also *eraṇḍaka*, in ~*tela*, castor-oil (V 3:251,23, 5:129,4, *pañca telāni tila,telaṃ sāsapa,telaṃ madhuka,telaṃ ~am vasā,telaṃ*, ie sesame oil, mustard oil, honey-tree oil, castor oil and grease oil) ≈ MA 2:344,32; SA 2:294. The Indian castor-oil plant is a fast-growing, suckering perennial shrub that can reach the size of a small tree (around 12 m = 39 ft).

⁷⁶ "The freedom from bondage" (*yoga-k,khema,kāmo*): for a similar usage, see **Dvedhā Vitakka S** (M 19,25/1:-117), SD 61.1.

⁷⁷ *So yā tā sāla,laṭṭhiyo kuṭilā ojā,paharaṇiyo tā chetvā bahiddhā nīhareyya, anto,vanaṃ suvisodhitam visodheyya*.

⁷⁸ "Crooked," *kuṭilā* here seems to have a figurative sense, suggesting that they exhaust the goodness of the soil that will then affect the growth and vitality of the sal trees.

⁷⁹ "That sap vitality away," *ojā,paharaṇiyo*, lit "that destroy the essence."

⁸⁰ *Tañ c'assa eḷaṇḍehi sañchannaṃ. Tassa kocid eva puriso uppajjeyya attha,kāmo hita,kāmo yoga-k,khema,kāmo. So yā tā sāla,laṭṭhiyo kuṭilā ojā,paharaṇiyo tā chetvā bahiddhā nīhareyya, anto,vanaṃ suvisodhitam visodheyya. Yā pana tā sāla,laṭṭhiyo ujukā sujātā tā sammā parihareyya. Evañ h'etaṃ, bhikkhave, sāla,vanaṃ aparena samayena vuddhim virūḷhim vepullam āpajjeyya*.

⁸¹ "House lady" (*gaha,patānī*; Skt *grhapatnī*), housewife, the mistress of the house, wife of a householder (*gaha,pati*): V 3:213,30, 219,5; M 1:125,4 (= *ghara,sāminī*, MA 2:98.32); A 2:61,29, 3:295,16, 4:268,6.

'The house lady Vedehikā is gentle; the house lady Vedehikā is humble; the house lady Vedehikā is calm.⁸⁴

9.2 Now, bhikshus, the house lady Vedehikā's woman-slave, named **Kālī**, was capable,⁸⁵ diligent,⁸⁶ and careful⁸⁷ in her work.⁸⁸

Then, bhikshus, this occurred to the woman-slave Kālī:

'Our house lady Vedehikā's good reputation has been spread about, thus:

"The house lady Vedehikā is gentle, the house lady Vedehikā is humble, the house lady Vedehikā is calm."

9.3 What now, is there actually anger within my lady, only that she does not show it, or is there really not? Or, is it just that these tasks of mine have been carefully done that my lady is calm, but there is actually anger in her, only that she does not show it, or is there really not?

What now if I investigate the lady?⁸⁹

9.4 (1) Then, bhikshus, the woman-slave Kālī woke up late in the day. Then, bhikshus, the house-lady Vedehikā said this [126] to the woman-slave Kālī:

'Hey you, Kālī!'⁹⁰

'What is it, madam?'

'What's this, you got up late in the day?'⁹¹

'It's nothing at all, madam!'

'Nothing's the matter indeed, you bad slave—you got up late!' She was *angry*, displeased, and frowning.

9.5 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to the woman-slave Kālī:

"Although my lady shows no anger, it is still present within her, not absent. And, it is simply because these tasks of mine have been carefully done that my lady showed no anger although it is present within her, not absent.

What now if I were to examine my lady a little more!'

9.6 (2) Then, bhikshus, the woman-slave Kālī woke up later in the day. Then, bhikshus, the house-lady Vedehikā said this to the woman-slave Kālī:

'Hey you, Kālī!'

⁸² Comy says that she was a daughter of family living in the kingdom of Videhā; or, *veda* means "knowledge," so that Vedehikā is one with wisdom. It means that she is wise (*paṇḍita*). (MA 2:98)

⁸³ On the stock, "(his) good reputation has been spread about, thus," *evaṃ kalyāṇo kitti,saddo abbhuggato* applied to the Buddha, see: **V** 1:35; **D** 1:49, 116, 236, 2:317; **M** 1:285, 2:167; **S** 5:352; **A** 1:180, 3:58, 4:80 (*kalyāṇo ... abbhuggaccheyya*); **Sn** p103; **J** 1:509.

⁸⁴ *Soratā vedehikā gahapatānī, nivātā vedehikā gahapatānī, upasantā vedehikā gahapatānīti.*

⁸⁵ "Capable" (*dakkhā*): Comy says that her work incl cooking meals, spreading the beds, and lighting the lamps (MA 2:99)

⁸⁶ "Diligent" (*anālasā*), ie she rises early for work (*uṭṭhāhakā*) (MA 2:99).

⁸⁷ "Careful in her work" (*susāmvihata,kammantā*): she does not break or chip anything despite her diligence (MA 2:99).

⁸⁸ *Vedehikāya kho pana, bhikkhave, gaha,patāniyā kālī nāma dāsī ahoṣi dakkhā anālasā susāmvihita,kammantā.*

⁸⁹ One explanation for the seeming insubordinate acts of the woman-slave (*dāsī*) is that slaves, unlike, waged labourers, had privileges that they did not. On the status of slaves in the Buddha's time, see **Myth in Buddhism**, SD 36.1 (2.2.2.6). Moreover, there is a touch of humour in this parable.

⁸⁹ A 1:213, 4:252, 256, 261.

⁹⁰ *He je kālī*. The phrase *he je* is a vocative (calling words), which Comys gloss as *are* (MA 2:99; DA 1:265), which is an interjection, expression of astonishment, discontent, contempt, or threat (CPD). The Pali form *are*, however, is not found in the Canon; only in Comys and later works. See sv: CPD & DP.

⁹¹ *Kiṃ je divā uṭṭhāsīti?* Comy glosses as "Are you unwell?" (*kiṃ kiñci aphāsukarṃ atthīti*, lit "Is there anything that is making you uncomfortable?" MA 2:99).

‘What is it, madam?’

‘What’s this, you got up even later in the day?’

‘It’s nothing at all, madam!’

‘Nothing’s the matter indeed, you bad slave—you got up even later!’ she was *angry*, displeased, and uttered words of displeasure.

9.7 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to the woman-slave Kālī:

‘Although my lady shows no anger, it is still present within her, not absent. And, it *is* simply because these tasks of mine have been carefully done that my lady she showed no anger although it is present within her, not absent.

What now if I were to examine my lady a little more!’

9.8 (3) Then, bhikshus, the woman-slave Kālī woke up even later in the day. Then, bhikshus, the house-lady Vedehikā said this to the woman-slave Kālī:

‘Hey you, Kālī!’

‘What is it, madam?’

‘What’s this, you got up even later still in the day?’

‘It’s nothing at all, madam!’

‘Nothing’s the matter indeed, you bad slave—you got up even later in the day!’ she was *angry*, displeased, and taking a door-bolt, struck her head and cut it!⁹²

9.9 Then, bhikshus, the woman-slave Kālī with blood streaming down her head, complained to the neighbours:

‘See, madams, an action of the gentle one! See, madams, an action of the humble one! See, madams, an action of the calm one!’

How can she be angry and displeased with a woman-slave who has woken late in the day! Look, taking a door-bolt, she hit my head making it bleed!’

9.10 Then, bhikshus, in due course, this ill-repute about the house-lady Vedehikā then spread about, thus:

‘The house-lady Vedehikā is fierce! The house-lady Vedehikā is not humble! The house-lady Vedehikā is not calm!⁹³

A false front

10 Even so, bhikshus, here **a certain monk** appears to very gentle, very humble, very calm, that is, *so long as no disagreeable course of words touches him*.⁹⁴

But, bhikshus, it is when disagreeable words touch a monk that he should be known to be ‘**gentle**,’ or to be ‘**humble**,’ or to be ‘**calm**.’

10.2 Bhikshus, I do not call a monk tractable [easily admonished] or makes himself tractable [teachable] *for the sake of robes, almsfood, lodging, and medicine, support and necessities for the sick*.⁹⁵

⁹² *Aggaḷa, sūcim gahetvā sise pahāraṃ adāsi, sīsaṃ vobhindi. Māra Tajjanīya S* (M 50) says that Māra possessed a certain boy and makes him hurl a stone at the monk Vidhūra, making his head bleed (M 50,21/1:336), SD 36.4.

⁹³ *Caṇḍī vedehikā gaha, patānī, anivātā vedehikā gaha, patānī, anupasantā vedehikā gaha, patānīti*. See (1.4.3).

⁹⁴ *Evam eva kho, bhikkhave, idh’ekacco bhikkhu tāvad eva sorata, sorato hoti nivāta, nivāto hoti upasantūpasanto hoti yāva na amanāpā vacana, pathā phusanti*.

⁹⁵ L S Cousins thinks that *gilana* here prob does not mean “sick,” but “refers rather to tiredness that may come late in the day for those who do not eat after noon” (1997:271). This might well happen, but it is clear from the numerous Vinaya rules regarding health and sickness (see esp **Bhesajja Khandhaka** (Mv 6 @ V 1:199-252). See **Right livelihood**, SD 38.1 (4.3), Ency Bsm: Bhesajja & K G Zysk 199838-72. See also **Lakkhaṇa S** (D 30) @ SD 36.9 (5.1).

Why is that?

Because, bhikshus, when that monk does *not* receive robes, almsfood, lodging, and medicine, support and necessities for the sick, he is not tractable, he does not make himself tractable.

Being tractable for the right reasons

10.3 But, bhikshus, when a monk, **honouring the Dharma**, respecting the Dharma, esteeming the Dharma, venerating the Dharma, revering the Dharma,⁹⁶ is tractable, or makes himself tractable, him I say to be one who is *tractable*.

10.4 Therefore, bhikshus, you should consider, thus:

‘Only in honouring the Dharma, respecting the Dharma, esteeming the Dharma, venerating the Dharma, revering the Dharma, we shall be *tractable*, or *make ourselves tractable*.’

This is how, bhikshus, you should train yourselves.

The 5 ways of speech

11 Bhikshus, there are **these 5 ways of speech** that others use to speak to you, that is, to say:⁹⁷

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (1) timely or | untimely, |
| (2) true or | untrue, |
| (3) gentle or | harsh, |
| (4) connected with the goal or | unconnected with the goal, |
| (5) with lovingkindness or | with a hating heart. |

11.2 When others speak with you, bhikshus, they might speak in a *timely* manner or in an *untimely* manner.

When others speak with you, bhikshus, they might speak in a gentle manner or in a *harsh* manner.

When others speak with you, bhikshus, they might speak in a truthful manner or in a *false* manner.

When others speak with you, bhikshus, they might speak in a manner connected with the goal [127] or in a manner *unconnected with the goal*.

When others speak with you, bhikshus, they might speak with lovingkindness or with a *hating* heart.

LOVINGKINDNESS

11.3 Therein, bhikshus, you should train yourselves thus:

‘Our hearts will not be perverted in any way, nor shall we utter any bad speech,

but **we shall dwell with a heart of lovingkindness, moved by goodness, without a hating heart**; [§6.3]

and we will dwell pervading that person with a heart of lovingkindness.

11.4 And based on that [And beginning there],⁹⁸ we will dwell pervading the whole world⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Even the Buddha reveres the Dharma, putting it above himself: **Gārava S** (S 6.2), SD 12.3.

⁹⁷ This whole subsection: *Pañc’ime bhikkhave vacana, pathā yehi vo pare vadamānā vadeyyurū—kālena vā akālena vā, bhūtena vā abhūtena vā, sañhena vā pharusena vā, attha, samhītena vā anatta, samhītena vā, metta, cittā vā dos’antarā vā. Cf*

⁹⁸ “Based on that,” *tad-ārammaṇaṃ* (lit “with that as object”). Comy explains this as meaning that we first cultivate lovingkindness towards the person addressing us with any of the 5 courses of speech. Then we direct that lovingkindness to all beings, making the whole world the object. (MA 2:100)

⁹⁹ Here “the whole world” (*sabbavantarā lokarā*) refers to “all beings” (*sabba, satta, vantarā*), ie, the world of beings (*satta, loka*) (MA 2:100). Buddhaghosa summarizes the senses of *loka* as used in the suttas as follows: (1) the

with a heart of lovingkindness, **vast, grown great,¹⁰⁰ boundless**, free from hate, free from ill will.¹⁰¹
This is how you, bhikshus, should train yourselves.

Parable of one trying to dig up the earth

12 Suppose, bhikshus, a man were to come along bringing a hoe and a basket, and were to say this:
'I will make **this whole earth** to be no more earth!¹⁰²

He would, digging here and there, strewing earth about here and there, spitting on it here and there, peeing on it here and there, say: 'This will no more be earth! This will no more be earth!'¹⁰³

What do you think, bhikshus, would this man be able to make this great earth no more earth?"

"Not at all, bhante!"

12.2 "What is the reason for this?"

"This great earth, bhante, is *deep, not to be measured*. It would not be easy to make her no more earth. In due course, he would only have his share of weariness and disappointment."

Refrain: The 5 ways of speech

13 *Even so, bhikshus, there are these 5 ways of speech that others use to speak to you, that is, to say:*
timely or untimely,
true or untrue,
gentle or harsh,
connected with the goal or unconnected with the goal,
with lovingkindness or with a hating heart.

13.2 *When others speak with you, bhikshus, they might speak in a timely manner or in an untimely manner.*

When others speak with you, bhikshus, they might speak in a truthful manner or in a false manner.

When others speak with you, bhikshus, they might speak in a gentle manner or in a harsh manner.

When others speak with you, bhikshus, they might speak in a manner connected with the goal or in a manner unconnected with the goal.

When others speak with you, bhikshus, they might speak with lovingkindness or with a hating heart.

world of formations (*sankhāra, loka*); (2) the world of beings (*satta, loka*); (3) the world of space (*okāsa, loka*) (Vism 7.37/204 f; DA 1:173; MA 1:397, 2:200). See further **Rohitassa S** (S 2.26), SD 7.2 (1).

¹⁰⁰ The mind "grown great" (*maha-g, gattā*) or exalted perception refers to the mind in dhyana of the form sphere (*rūpāvacara*). See **Catuttha Jhāna Pañha S** (S 40.4), SD 24.14 (4).

¹⁰¹ *Tañ ca puggalaṃ mettā, sahatena cetasā pharitvā viharissāma, tad-ārammaṇaṃ ca sabbāvantaṃ lokam met-tā, sahatena cittaṃ vipulena maha-g, gattena appamāṇena averena avyābajjhena pharitvā viharissāmāti.* The form *avyābajjha* (*abyabajjha*) = *avyāpajjha* (*abyāpajjha*). This stock describes a meditator who is *fully focused*. "Vast" or "bountiful" (**vipula**) means he has attained samadhi or full concentration, and as such is "grown great" (**maha-g, gata**), that is, free (least temporarily) of all the mental hindrances (SD 32), and thereby attained to dhyana. Only such a heart can truly be "boundless" or "measureless" (*appamana*) because, at least momentarily, going beyond conceit, the meditator *does not measure anyone but sees all beings as they really are*, without regarding anyone as a stranger or an enemy, or harbouring any negative thought: he is "free from hate, free from ill will" (*averena avyābajjhena*). For details & refs, see **Brahma, vihāra**, SD 38.5 (2.1.3).

¹⁰² *Ahaṃ imaṃ mahā, pathaviṃ apathaviṃ karissāmāti.*

¹⁰³ *So tatra tatra vikkhāyeya, tatra tatra vikireyya, tatra tatra oṭṭhubheyya, tatra tatra omutteyya*—"*apathavī bhavasi, apathavī bhavasīti.*

LOVINGKINDNESS

13.3 *Therein, bhikshus, you should train yourselves thus:*

‘Our hearts will not be perverted in any way, nor shall we utter any bad speech,
but **we shall dwell with a heart of lovingkindness, moved by goodness, without a hating heart.** [§6.3]

13.4 And we will dwell pervading that person with a heart of lovingkindness.

And based on that, we will dwell pervading the whole world with a heart of lovingkindness,
vast, grown great, boundless, free from hate, free from ill will.’ [§11.4]

This is how you, bhikshus, should train yourselves.

Parable of someone trying to draw pictures in space

14 Suppose, bhikshus, a person were to come along with **lac**, or **turmeric**, or **cloud-grey**,¹⁰⁴ or **crimson**,¹⁰⁵ and he were to say thus:

‘I will paint a figure in the space [in the air]!¹⁰⁶ I will create a form!’¹⁰⁷

What do you think, bhikshus, would this person be able to paint a figure in the air, or create a form?”

“Not at all, bhante!”

14.2 “What is the reason for this?”

“This space [air], bhante, is *formless, without any feature [unpredicated]*.¹⁰⁸ It would not easy to paint a figure or create a form there. In due course, [128] he would only have his share of weariness and disappointment.”

Refrain: The 5 ways of speech

15 *Even so, bhikshus, there are these 5 ways of speech that others use to speak to you, that is, to say:*

*timely or untimely,
true or untrue,
gentle or harsh,
connected with the goal or unconnected with the goal,
with lovingkindness or with a hating heart.*

15.2 *When others speak with you, bhikshus, they might speak in a timely manner or in an untimely manner.*

When others speak with you, bhikshus, they might speak in a truthful manner or in a false manner.

When others speak with you, bhikshus, they might speak in a gentle manner or in a harsh manner.

¹⁰⁴ *Nīla* is a dark colour, esp dark-blue, blue-black, dark green, blue-green, collyrium. Comy & V list 2 senses of *nīla*: (1) of bronze or bell-metal (*kaṃsa.nīla*), (2) of foliage (*palāsa,nīla*) (MA 2:100 = V 4:120,30). VA glosses *kaṃsa,-nīla* as “a leather-worker’s *nīla*” (*kaṃsa,nīlan ti camma,kāra,nīlaṃ*, VA 863), which suggests that *nīla* incl brown.

¹⁰⁵ This list of colours—lac or reddish dye (*lākha*), turmeric (*haliddī*), sky-blue or indigo (*nīla*) and crimson (*maññiṭṭha*)—are at **Kakacūpama S** (M 21,14/1:127), SD 38.1; **Atthi,rāga S** (S 12.64,8/2:102), SD 26.10 (qv n); **Gaddula,baddha S 2** (S 22.100,11/3:152), SD 28.7b; (**Nīvaraṇa**) **Saṅgārava S** (S 46.55,4.2+10/5:121 = 124), SD 3.12; (**Manta**) **Saṅgārava S** (A 5.193,3+8/3:230 = 233 f), SD 73.3.

¹⁰⁶ *Ākāsa* (Skt *ākāśa*) has these senses: “the firmament, upper regions, heaven(s), sky, air; space; open space; the ether, fifth element (the others being earth, water, fire, and wind)”; but here used non-technically. See Tha 1155, where *ākāsa* appears in the same context: see foll.

¹⁰⁷ Cf Tha 1155: For whoever would think of colouring the air with yellow | or another other—this is only inviting trouble (*ākāsamhi haliddāya yo maññetha rajetave | aññena vā’pi raṅgena, vighāt’udayam eva taṃ*). Tha:N renders *ākāsa* as “the sky.”

¹⁰⁸ *Ayañ hi, bhante, ākāso arūpī anidassano.* Cf Dh 254, 255. On *anidassana*, see M 49,25/1:329 + SD 11.7(9).

When others speak with you, bhikshus, they might speak in a manner connected with the goal or in a manner unconnected with the goal.

When others speak with you, bhikshus, they might speak with lovingkindness or with a hating heart.

LOVINGKINDNESS

15.3 *Therein, bhikshus, you should train yourselves thus:*

‘Our hearts will not be perverted in any way, nor shall we utter any bad speech, but **we shall dwell with a heart of lovingkindness, moved by goodness, without a hating heart.** [§6.3]

15.4 And we will dwell pervading that person with **a heart of lovingkindness.**

And based on that, we will dwell pervading the whole world with a heart of lovingkindness, vast, grown great, boundless, free from hate, free from ill will.’ [§11.4]

This is how you, bhikshus, should train yourselves.

Parable of someone trying to burn up the Ganges with a grass-torch

16 Suppose, bhikshus, a man were to come, bringing along **a blazing grass-torch**,¹⁰⁹ and were to say: ‘With this blazing grass-torch, I will heat up this river Ganges and boil it away!’

What do you think, bhikshus, would that man be able to heat up this river Ganges and boil it away?”
“Not at all, bhante!”

16.2 “What is the reason for this?”

“The river Ganges, bhante, is *deep, unfathomable*.¹¹⁰ It is not easy to heat her up and boil her away. In due course, he would only have his share of weariness and disappointment.”

Refrain: The 5 ways of speech

17 Even so, bhikshus, there are these **5 ways of speech** that others use to speak to you, that is to say:

timely or	untimely,
true or	untrue,
gentle or	harsh,
connected with the goal or	unconnected with the goal,
with lovingkindness or	with a hating heart.

17.2 *When others speak with you, bhikshus, they might speak in a timely manner or in an untimely manner.*

When others speak with you, bhikshus, they might speak in a truthful manner or in a false manner.

When others speak with you, bhikshus, they might speak in a gentle manner or in a harsh manner.

When others speak with you, bhikshus, they might speak in a manner connected with the goal or in a manner unconnected with the goal.

When others speak with you, bhikshus, they might speak with lovingkindness or with a hating heart.

LOVINGKINDNESS

17.3 *Therein, bhikshus, you should train yourselves thus:*

‘Our hearts will not be perverted in any way, nor shall we utter any bad speech, but **we shall dwell with a heart of lovingkindness, moved by goodness, without a hating heart.**

¹⁰⁹ Cf **Potaliya S** (M 54), where the parable says that a man holding such a torch against the wind would burn himself (M 54,17/1:365).

¹¹⁰ *Gaṅgā hi bhante nadī gambhīrā appa,eyyā.*

And we will dwell pervading that person with a heart of lovingkindness.

17.4 And based on that, we will dwell pervading the whole world with a heart of lovingkindness, *vast, grown great, boundless*, free from hate, free from ill will.’ [§11.4]

This is how you, bhikshus, should train yourselves.

Parable of someone trying to rustle a catskin bag

18 Suppose, bhikshus, there were a **catskin bag**,¹¹¹ scrubbed and beaten, so that it is made supple, very supple, thoroughly supple, soft like cotton.¹¹²

Then, a man were to come along with a stick or potsherd, and were to say:

‘This catskin bag, scrubbed and beaten, so that it is made supple, very supple, thoroughly supple, soft like cotton—I will make a scrubbing and beating sound of it with a stick or a potsherd.’¹¹³

18.2 What do you think, bhikshus, would this man be able, with a stick or a potsherd, to make a scrubbing and beating sound of this catskin bag, scrubbed and beaten, so that it is made supple, very supple, thoroughly supple, soft like cotton?”

“No at all, bhante!”

18.3 “What is the reason for this?”

“For, bhikshus, this catskin bag is scrubbed and beaten so that it is *made supple*, very supple, thoroughly supple, *soft like cotton*.

It is not easy to scrub or beat it with a stick or a potsherd. For, in due course, that person would only have his share of weariness and disappointment.”

Refrain: The 5 ways of speech

19 Even so, bhikshus, there are these **5 ways of speech** that others use to speak to you, that is, to say:

timely or [129]	untimely,
true or	untrue,
gentle or	harsh,
connected with the goal or	unconnected with the goal,
with lovingkindness or	with a hating heart.

19.2 *When others speak with you, bhikshus, they might speak in a timely manner or in an untimely manner.*

When others speak with you, bhikshus, they might speak in a truthful manner or in a false manner.

When others speak with you, bhikshus, they might speak in a truthful manner or in a false manner.

¹¹¹ “A catskin bag,” *biḷāra, bhastā*, also at Tha 1138; cf *biḍāla, bhaṣṭrā* (Mvst 2:261 f): see BHSD sv. Comy glosses it as “a catskin leather bag” (*biḷāra, camma, pasibbaka*, MA 2:101). Skt *bhāṣṭrā*, “a leathern bottle or vessel (used for carrying or holding water)” (SED). Here, catskin is either actual cat’s skin or some kind (prob an inferior kind) of silk (OED).

¹¹² *Seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, biḷāra, bhastā madditā sumadditā suparimadditā, mudukā tūlinī chinna, sassarā chinna, babbharā. Tūlinī* means “cotton-like,” foll Comy which glosses it as “like tufts of silk-cotton on a tufty branch” (*sim-bali, tūla, latā, tūla, samānā*, MA 2:101), but not “silk,” as in M:H which M:ÑB follows. Below is mentioned the phrase *bhara, bharaṃ karissāmi*, which means “will make the sound *bhara, bhara*,” ie when beating a skin, and we have Marathi, *bhara, bhara*, imitative of certain brisk sounds. This in Pali becomes *babbhara*, for *bhabbhara = bharbhara*. (JPTS 1889:209). The parable recurs at Tha 1138.

¹¹³ Closing phrase: *Kaṭṭhena vā kathalena vā sara, saraṃ karissāmi bhara, bharaṃ karissāmi.*

*When others speak with you, bhikshus, they might speak in a gentle manner or in a harsh manner.
When others speak with you, bhikshus, they might speak in a manner connected with the goal or in a manner unconnected with the goal.*

When others speak with you, bhikshus, they might speak with lovingkindness or with a hating heart.

LOVINGKINDNESS

19.3 *Therein, bhikshus, you should train yourselves thus:*

‘Our hearts will not be perverted in any way, nor shall we utter any bad speech,

*but **we shall dwell with a heart of lovingkindness, moved by goodness, without a hating heart.** [§6.3]*

And we will dwell pervading that person with a heart of lovingkindness.

19.4 *And based on that, we will dwell pervading the whole world with a heart of lovingkindness, vast, grown great, boundless, free from hate, free from ill will.’ [§15.4]*

The parable of the saw¹¹⁴

20 *Bhikshus, even if low-down thieves were to cut you up from limb to limb with a **double-handed saw**,¹¹⁵ if you were ever to defile your mind with anger, you are thereby not a doer of my teaching.¹¹⁶*

20.2 *Therein, bhikshus, you should train yourselves in this way:*

‘Our hearts will not be perverted in any way, nor shall we utter any bad speech,

*but **we shall dwell with a heart of lovingkindness, moved by goodness, without a hating heart.** [§6.3]*

And we will dwell pervading that person with a heart of lovingkindness.

20.3 *And based on that, we will dwell pervading the whole world with a heart of lovingkindness, vast, grown great, boundless, free from hate, free from ill will.’ [§11.4]*

This is how you, bhikshus, should train yourselves.

21 *If, bhikshus, this exhortation on the parable of the saw were to be borne in mind constantly by you, would you see any course of speech, trivial or gross, that you could not endure?”¹¹⁷*

“None at all, bhante!”

21.2 *“Therefore, bhikshus, **constantly keep in mind this exhortation on the parable of the saw.** It would be for your good and happiness for a long time.”*

The Blessed One said this. Satisfied, the monks rejoiced in the Blessed One’s word.¹¹⁸

— evaṃ —

¹¹⁴ Qu in some detail in **Mahā Hatthi, padôpama S** (M 28,9/1:186,11 + 24/1:189,24), SD 6.16.

¹¹⁵ “Double-handed saw,” *ubhato, daṇḍaka kakaca*. Such a saw, worked by two persons, was used to make clean cross-cuts of a standing tree or free lumber. Two-man saws were also known to the ancient Romans, but became common in Europe only in the mid-15th cent. In North America, crosscut saws were used as early as the mid-17th cent, but felling saws only began to replace axes for felling trees in the late 19th cent.

¹¹⁶ *Tatrâpi yo mano padûseyya, na me so tena sâsana, karo*. Comy specifies that *yo* here refers to either a monk or a nun (ie not a lay person) (MA 2:102).

¹¹⁷ *Imañ ca tumhe, bhikkhave, kakacûpamaṃ ovâdaṃ abhikkhaṇaṃ manasi kareyyâtha, passatha no tumhe, bhikkhave, taṃ vacana, pathaṃ, aṇuṃ vā thūlaṃ vā, yaṃ tumhe nâdhivâseyyâthâti?*

¹¹⁸ Note that there is no mention here of Phagguna’s response to the Buddha’s teaching: see §6.5 (last line).

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